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Revisiting Bengali History in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Tara Prasad Aryal has completed his thesis entitled *Revisiting Bengali History* in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim* under my supervision. He carried out his research from July 2018 to April 2019. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The research paper entitled, Revisiting Bengali History in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslims* submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Tara Prasad Aryal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Revisiting Bengali History in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*

### Abstract

*Anam's novel The Good Muslim is a representation of the fragmented society after the independence war of Bangladesh. Maya is the central character and she is projected as a very rebellious and dynamic character in the novel. She fights against the ideology of patriarchal society which imposes authority on women even when they have fought for the sake of state in the independence war of Bangladesh. Maya has challenged the absurd characteristics of soldiers. The major thrust of the thesis is to explore how Anam projects the idea of equal rights and justice for both male and female as they have equally participated in the war. The researcher in order to justify the claim draws on the theoretical insights of Stephen Greenblatt's "Practicing New Historicism". New Historicism interrogates the official history and explores the history of margin. Tahmima Anam raises questions to the state that why the state ignores the presence of female in the independence war of Bangladesh instead of honoring them as male. Anam opposes the trend of male centric history writing tradition in the past in this novel. Maya struggles for the position of women participated in the independence war of Bangladesh. Anam fights for both male and female for equal rights, justice and honor in the independence war of Bangladesh.*

Key Words: New Historicism, Independence war of Bangladesh,

Marginalization, Justice, Equality, Gender roles.

## Introduction

This research entitled " Revisiting Bengali History in Tahamima Anam's *The Good Muslim*" entangled into the problem of how Anam counters the official history of Bangladesh. *The Good Muslim* is a story about the fragmented society after the independence war in Bangladesh. It describes the story of Haque family. Rehana, a Mother, Maya, a daughter, Sohail, a son are the major characters in the novel. They are born and grown up in Bangladesh. It portrays the contribution of women in the independence war of Bangladesh. Maya, Rehana and Sohail perform the action as freedom fighter. As Maya grows up in Muslim community, she tackled many problems during and after the war. She is bound up with both religious and patriarchal conventions in the society. Maya, as a representative character of many women, reflects the realities they faced in the society. Maya not only battle between religion and modernity but also rejects and challenges patriarchal conventions and religious beliefs.

Male and female both participated in the war and performed their bravery during the independence war of Bangladesh. They played the role of freedom fighter as they are the real lover of nation like male. However the authority of Bangladesh only honored males and ignored the role of females in the war. Women were tortured physically and mentally in the war. They were sexually exploited by the soldier during the war and beard unwanted pregnancy. Almost all the victimized women want to get rid of those infant because the state does not want those children whose fathers are unknown. Maya and her mother work in women rehabilitation centre as volunteer. They work as counselor in order to console them because they are worried that how can they come back to their family. Most of the females lose their family members in

the war. They also join in the war and the society strictly prohibited them to returning in the society because they break the religious beliefs and social conventions. Maya works as abortionist to abort unwanted pregnancy of those violated women in the war because the state named the war children as bastard children. In Muslim community abortion child is not allowed but Maya performed the task without hesitation because she knows the sufferings of victimized women.

On the other hand, Sohail transformed into fundamentalist Muslim to get relief of sin where he is compelled to murder many innocent people. He dislikes the task of Maya in Women Rehabilitation Centre when he knows it. The other female figure like Piya and Silvi also performed vital role in the war though they are not valorized by the state. The official history of Bangladesh, the contribution of female role in the war was not mentioned properly. The state only respects and honors male as well as they are financially supported. The followers of Muslim community always suppressed female and they cannot raise their voice. Women are not allowed to show their face and cover with Burka. In the very situation women counter the rules and beliefs and join the independence war of Bangladesh. The state instead of honoring, ignore their role. Many women were the victims of sexual violence. They were raped which led to the birth of thousands of war babies.

The battle was fought between East Pakistan and West Pakistan and after the liberation war East Pakistan became independent Bangladesh. It got separated from West Pakistan. Pakistan army also kept numerous Bengali women as sex slaves. Many women were killed and those who survived had returned, but the community expelled them. The state did not give any importance to the baby those who were the product of raped women. The state named them as bastard children because their fathers were unknown.

During the periods of nineteenth and twentieth centuries the role of the females were not recorded in the history of 1970s. The writer encapsulates the pain and sufferings of women through the means of fiction. In the then period, their pain and sufferings were got hid in mainstream history. There were not any medium to reveal their truth and their role and contribution. Even though they performed heroically, and patriotically their action was shadowed. They challenged the social norms and values practiced in the society in which they are expected to be silent, chaste and obedient. They discarded for the submissive role of women and split the role of women as passive, docile, silence and obedient to active and revolutionary. But they were not noticed in the society. By the very time women were aware of literature and used it as the medium to express their sorrows and sufferings. So that, some women begin to write their role and contribution through the means of novel, article and autobiography. However their literary works were not much popular and noticed by only few people.

Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer confronts the issue on why the state ignores the role of women even if they are ready to sacrifice their life for the nation. She counters the Bangladeshi male centric history writing tradition with the help of fictional story of Haque family. Maya, as a central character in the novel, seeks to find out the equal justice for male and female. She raises the voice for women those who are ignored and the state neglected their contribution in the independence war of Bangladesh. So in the novel *The Good Muslim*, the women who participated in the war blamed the title "Bironogona" and demand the name war heroine and wanted to accept their presence in the society. Tahmima Anam in her novel *The Good Muslim* questions the official history of Bangladesh in order to give equal justice and honor for the war fighter.

The major contention of the research is that both male and female participated in the war but only the bravery and contribution of male was praised but the role of women was ignored. There is no any care about the contribution of female. The state didn't look back to honor and financially support to the male but it neglects for the support of female in the war. Here in the novel *The Good Muslim*, writer confronts on why the state ignores the role of female though they are ready to sacrifice their life for the nation. Anam questions the state that the presence of war women in the society is humiliated. In the novel, she valorizes the women's participation and contribution in the war as well as trying to give justice for female for their patriotic work.

*The Good Muslim* portrays context of independence war of Bangladesh. It reveals the annoying realities of women in liberation war of Bangladesh in 1972. The coverage of story is about two decades after the independence war of Bangladesh. It is trying to reflect the condition of women after the war. They were ashamed of being raped by soldier and there is no proper environment to be back into their families. Their pain and worries are not noticed by the authorities. Being a Muslim and being a female have to face many difficulties. They are oppressed by the both patriarchal and religious beliefs and values and they cannot uplift by their position in the society. She tries to depict the double subjugating state of female in the Muslim community. To be born in a Muslim community and participate in the war is not an easy thing but they are ready to tackle the difficulties. To join the war by women in Bangladesh is to break the norms and values in the society. They do not want any discrimination between male and female. So they do not hesitate to holdup the risk to sacrifice their life.

The trend of writing women's story has begun since 1920s. The civil war, migration of people and other various reasons are the reasons that the female started

their writings. At first female's writing were not noticed and not popular because the society believes that female writes on the trifle issues and they do not have any contribution in the society. Women have their own stories. They had contributed as equal as male in the society. But their sacrifice is not counted as equal as male. So they do not have proper medium to express their experiences, feelings and sufferings. That is why women literary figures started their writings in order to reveal female experiences and sufferings in the war. Here in the novel *The Good Muslim*, Anam demonstrates the women condition after the independence war of Bangladesh. Women difficulties and troubles in the war cannot observe if Anam has not raised the issues in the novel. Anam tries to reflect the horrible condition of female after the independence war of Bangladesh by bringing the different female character in the novel.

I have applied New Historicism as methodology to study Tahamima Anam's *The Good Muslim* which contributes to rework on the official history of Bangladesh where female were shadowed and male were highlighted in the independence war of Bangladesh. The insight of The New Historicism is an idea of Greenblatt's work *Practicing New Historicism* and by structuralist and post structuralist theories, seeks to reconnect a work with the cultural and political movement of the time. Stephen Greenblatt in his influential essay *Towards a Poetics of Culture* explains,

. . . he proposes to situate this practice in relation to marxism on the one hand and post structuralism on the other. Citing passage from Marxist Frederic Jameson and the post structuralist Jean-Francois Lyotard, Greenblatt questions the generalization made about capitalism in each passage. (764)

Literary works are the product of specific historical condition. Thus, Literary text also

must be treated along with its historicity. In the similar context, M.H Abrams in his text *A Glossary of Literary terms* , defines New Historicism as:

In an off quitted phrase, Louise Montrose describes the New Historicism as a reciprocal concern with the historicity of the the text and the textuality of history. That is history is conceived not to be a set of fixed, objective facts but like the literature with which it interacts a text which itself needs to be interpreted. Any text on the other hand, is conceived as discourse which, although it may seem to represent or reflect on external reality, in fact consists of what are called representation that is verbal formations which are the ideological product or cultural constructs of the historicalcondition.(183-84)

Rejecting the traditional historicist's notion of continuity, progress and objectivity, New Historicism makes a parallel study of history and literature and posits to both genre. So it neither evaluates literature at the cost of history, not it goes the other way round. it regards both of them are after all, the product of the same ideology of the time. Further, New Historicism considers literary texts as the interpretation of history since literary texts represent human experience at a given time and space.

New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historical movement that created it. A helpful way of considering New Historicist theory, Tyson explains:

The question asked by tradiditional historian and new historian is quite different and that's because these approaches to history are based on very different views of what history is and how we can know it. Traditional historicists ask, "what happened?" and What does the event tell us about the history?"In contrast, new historicist asks, "how has the event been interpreted?"andwaht do the interpretations tell us about the

interpreters?"(282)

Moreover, New Historicism holds that we are hopelessly subjective interpreters of what we observe.

Michel Foucault provides an interesting method of reading history and literature in the same paradigm. In New Historicism, history is not just recording of the facts and events and narration of what happened in the past; rather it is the reflection of subjectivity of the historians, and all discourse are impregnated with political interest and biases. New Historicists aim simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature.

History not only records the past events and activities but also goes together with the changes since its nature is dynamic. Humans have to adopt the change according to the necessity but traditional tendency of human is much resistant creating great hurdle to go along the change. Maya in the novel fights for the equal rights and justice as man. She made the government punish the war criminals and accept the warrior women as they were before. Maya breaks the social practice in the society and encourages women not to tolerate male threat which is religiously guided.

Various critics have examined *The Good Muslim* in the light of religion and the reconciliation of the family. Only the few critiques including Mohammad Salim and Mandira Sen raises the issue of women struggles in the independence war of Bangladesh in *The Good Muslim* by the writer Tahmima Anam. Mandira Sen mentions,

Maya wants a war tribunal, she cannot accept What

Bangabandhu Mujibur Rahman, Rahman, the revered revolt against who has returned as Prime Minister has offered the nation's reverence towards the raped women as Birangonas, heroines, who have paid with their bodies, just as dead

male soldiers have for liberation. (30)

In Mandira Sen's point of view, the nation does not evaluate the significance of woman deeds. The name given them as "Birangonas" and "Heroins" does not give justice to the war wounded women and the struggle of women in war has taken simply and lightly by the society and the nation as well. In the novel *The Good Muslim*, through the central character Maya insists on the equal role of male and female in the war. She argues that the both the male and female should get justice. There should not be any limitation for rewarding the role of male and female in the independence war of Bangladesh.

Muslim community is such a community that has restricted to raise voice against oppression, miseries and difficulties faced by the female. Even though, Maya speaks against the nation that the nation disvalues the vital presence of the women in the war. The novel *The Good Muslim* represents the independence war of Bangladesh. In the official history, the role of female was ignored and none of one could speak against it but in the novel Maya challenges the patriarchal norms and conventions and speak against the society and nation which disvalue the role of female in the war.

Furthermore, through the spectacles of Mohammad Saleem, the novel is able to give human sufferings and traumatic experiences of innocent people in the independence war of Bangladesh. He states;

The novel gives human face to a nation's tumultuous history. The theme, the legacy of war and how individual lives are affected, opens a window to human psychology and behavior in different and contrasting hues. The war with Pakistan, then west Pakistan, that led to the formation of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation was a traumatic experiences that played havoc with the lives of many in the newly-formed country.(1)

Saleem highlights the real pain that the countries involved in war felt. War had badly traumatized the people there. Furthermore he states, "Maya is liberal minded 'village Doctor' helps women victims of war... she witness misery all the time, everywhere".(1) Maya testimonies the whole picture of war and the sufferings of women but the credit only goes to male and the participation of female has taken loosely by the nation.

The contribution of male was respected and honored by the state. However, the contribution of female was ignored by the government of Bangladesh. Women had feeling of shame after they returned from the war and male had feeling of pride instead of war. Male hegemony towards female is appearance even in the war, though they perform heroic deeds and endure unbearable pain and sufferings. This is why my argument on the novel *The Good Muslim* is different than MohhamadSaleem.

Likewise, Elizabeth Fussell mentions "women typically suffer higher mortality rates than men"(29). In the novel, Silviloses her husband and Piya is pregnant from unknown Pakistani soldier and she has to abort her child because there is no place for the children of unknown father in the society as well as in the nation. All of them, Maya, Piya, and Silvi suffered their own. Maya has responsibility to get rid of unwanted child though it is the crime. In the one hand, Maya performed social work and the other hand in the same time she commits crime. It is very difficult to commit crime by knowing. Many women lose their family because they were neglected by the community and also lose their family members in the war. In this way, in one way or another, women suffer a lot and their sufferings is not appropriately addressed by the nation. Fussel states about the sentiments and emotions of women which they felt after the war. However she does not talk about gender equality in the independence war of Bangladesh. So as a researcher my concern here is about equality of both

gender male and female participation in the war.

In the same line, Concerning Anam's interview Amy Finnerty comments "With her 2011 follow-up novel, *The Good Muslim*, Anam continued to lead readers through that tumult, ... Remarkably from one after these consequential events she is able to her fiction, to bring them to life and even make them feel contemporary".(2)TahmimaAnam depicts the real picture of the contemporary time. The merciful pain and event of people caused by the colonial war is perfectly presents in her novel *The Good Muslim*.

TahmimaAnam follows the line of Arabic women literature which dealt on the issue of female writing. Before 1970s there was no trend of writing literature by female. There were no any medium to explore women experiences to the society. Gradually women considering as second sex by the society started to write on the issue of war in which they were participated physically and mentally. They reveal their contribution in the war through the means of literature and it is the best medium to evoke their sufferings in the society. TahmimaAnam raises the issue of independence war of Bangladesh and revolt against the response given to the male and female by the state and fought for the equality and justice for both male and female. Thus this research work explores the women struggle against an ingrained patriarchy. Anam focuses on Bangladeshi war women reality that they are under hegemony not only from local and social context rather they also suffer from nation.

The novel, *The Good Muslim* has been analyzed and reviewed from different perspectives since the day of its publication. The novelist has presented the suffering of a family which is badly affected by war. Valerie Miner in "Book Review: *The Good Muslim* by TahmimaAnam " published in Los Angeles Times writes about the novel in this line:

The Good Muslim brims with gripping narrative, absorbing history and Shakespearean moral conundrums ...Anam asks how the wounds of war shape us, all of us. She troubles the arbitrary distinctions of warrior, victim and bystander; she protests a discourse in which the pain of women raped by enemy soldiers is expunged by the mantle of war heroine. (2)

Anam shows gratitude towards those female in the war who were physically *participated* and showed their bravery in any ways. They not only fought in the war but also they forced to fulfill the soldier's sexual desire in the war. As a result she bears an infant in her belly and the state restricted to give birth to those war babies. Here Valerie instead of valorizing the participation in the war he only probes onto the history of independence war of Bangladesh and the condition of the sufferer in the war. My focus here is that there is a huge contribution of people to make stand Bangladesh stand as independent state. Both, male and female sacrifice to achieve the state as the sovereign state. But only the male is honored and financially supported and the role of female is ignored. There is no doubt about the courageous work of female but the state disregarded the position of female in the war.

Moreover, *The Good Muslim* challenges the trend of writing through the perspectives of male with the help of fictional story of Haque family. The author as a female writer highlighted the women's participation in the war as well as she seeks to find out the equal justice for both male and female. In the novel the author sets the story after the independence war of Bangladesh. Both the male and female participated in the war although only the male was honored and financially supported by the state. Here the researcher investigates into why the author Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer confronts on why the state ignores the role of women whether they are ready to sacrifice their life for the war. The researcher also investigates on

why Tahmima Anam writes about the independence war of Bangladesh and the researcher seeks to find out the original history of Bangladesh.

This research paper analyses Tahmima Anam's literary work *The Good Muslim* through the theoretical insights from Stephen Greenblatt practicing New Historicism. New Historicism projects that our subjectivity is shaped by and shapes the culture into which we are born. Our individuality is not just simply produced by society, neither is produced by our individual will, desire and choices rather individually and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect and define each other. This relationship is mutually constrictive and dynamically unstable. Every society constrain individual thought and action within a network of cultural limitations while it simultaneously enables individual thought and action within a network of cultural limitations while it simultaneously enables individual to think and act. Our subjectivity then is a lifelong process of negotiating our way consciously and unconsciously among the constraints and freedom offered in any given moment by the society in which we live in.

Thus, according to new historicist, power does not emanate only from the top of the political and socio-economic structure. According to French philosopher Michel Foucault, whose ideas have strongly influenced the development of New Historicism, power circulates in all direction to and form all social levels, at all times and the vehicle by which power circulates in never ending proliferation of exchange; the exchange of ideas through the various discourses a culture produces.

This concept of Foucault regarding power is explanatory. It aims to uncover how power diffuses itself in the system of authority and how the truths are created within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. Truth itself is the product of relation of power and changes as the system changes. Foucault also questions the concept of sex. Conventionally sex was seen as enlightenment; later

society forced it to be repressed. Thus, New Historicism's concern is to analyze any literary text as a social political rather than a timeless aesthetic object.

Infact, a focus on the historical narratives of marginalized people has been such an important feature of New Historicism that some theorists have asked how New Historicist that some theorists have asked how new historicist can accept narratives from oppressed peoples anymore readily than they have accepted narratives from patriarchal Anglo-European power structure. One answer to this question is that a plurality of voices including an equal representation of historical narrative from all groups help ensure that a 'master narrative', a narrativetold from a single cultural point of view that nevertheless, presume to offer the only accurate version of history- will no longer control our historical understanding. At this point, still we do not have equal representation of historical narratives from all groups. Therefore, New Historicism tries to provide the development of and gain attentions for the histories of marginalized people. Further, New Historicism considers literary texts as the interpretation of history since literary text represent huamn experience at a given time and space.

This project applies New Historicism as a literary theory to exposures the history of marginalized people in TahamimaAnams*The Good Muslim*taking the era of 1970s in consideration which was the climax of independence war of Bangladesh. With the theorization of New Historicism by Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, Louise Montrose and so on to support this claim that *The Good Muslim* is a representation of the marginalized voice.

*The Good Muslim* the novel by TahamimaAnam represents the Bengali history through the marginalized perspective. It historicizes the event of independence war of Bagladesh in 1972.Tahamima Anam in *The Good Muslim*

challenges the traditional ideas that history is a collection of facts in a form of text and it represents the history as it was real. The story of *The Good Muslim* reveals the fact that females participated in the war bravely but the state disqualified the role of women and only valorizes the bravery of male. The state only honored the contribution of male in the war of Bangladesh. As we know that, the Muslim community restricts women from performing tasks according to their intention. Patriarchal conventions in the society could not give an opportunity to boost their talent and their capacity and also there is an obligation to arouse their voice in the society. As women are marginalized in the society and if they are always restricted by the society they would be always back in the society and there is no chance for their upliftment of their status in the community. However, Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer raises her voice against the exploitation of women by the state. As male, female also contribute physically and mentally in the independence war of Bangladesh, but the state rather giving honor and respect, given the name as war Birangana means prostitute in Bengali. So, Tahmima Anam by the fictional character in the novel attempts to give justice for both male and female equally.

The state tries to ignore the heroic deeds of women even though they were suffered a lot. Only the male were considered as 'Freedom Fighter' and respected by the state. Until the contribution is not highlighted by the state, women would have endured a lot. Many women got pregnant from unknown Pakistani soldiers and soldiers of the own country and they were restricted from giving birth to those infants by the state. The war babies, children of raped, were not allowed to be born in the state. Maya the central character in the novel states;

I started working at the women's Rehabilitation centre. Ammoo too, we went to the office together, to volunteer and they gave her a job of talking to the war

widows, sorting out their pensions their property, negotiating with their husbands families. She took a deep breath, steadying herself for the next part. And Bhaiya, because I had medical experiences, you know from the camps, they assigned me to the wards. I performed abortions. You remember what Sheikh Mujib Said? That he didn't want those bastard children in our country.

(242)

Maya performed abortions in the novel to get rid of those growing seeds from unknown soldiers. The state ignores the role of female in the war as well as the growing infants of war fighter. Maya a Muslim girl counter the patriarchal and religious conventions practiced in the society. Ziba Mir-Hosseni explains; "Women often tried to change traditional laws by involving and relying on Islamic sacred texts. Their attempt to translate into policy the patriarchal gender notions inherent in traditional Islamic law provoked many women to increasing criticism of these notions and spurred them to greater activism".(12)

During the time when women are confined in the four walls, they cannot share their feelings and sufferings to the society. There was no any source to express their troubles and many more experiences because there is no any tendency to writing literature. Tahmima Anam represents the struggle and experiences of women in the independence war of Bangladesh through the literary text *The Good Muslim*.

Anam attempts to raise the hidden history of Bangladesh in which the sacrifice of women was neglected. According to the official history of Bangladesh, both the male and female fought as a freedom fighter to make the state independent. After the battle between Pakistan and Bangladesh the state is secured as independent state. However the state doesnot glorify the role of women. Harrington in her thesis "Women and Resistance in west Bengal and Bangladesh: 1967-1970 "mentions, "Yet

rather than being an equivalent to the mode title, this charged term appeared after the war in a Bangladeshi state-sponsored effort to evaluate the tens of thousands of females who were sexually victimized in the war for this secession of Bangladesh"(2). The state has only given the name that is Birongona and it doesn't support women financially and also not honored. So there is a question raised by Tahmima Anam that why the state only glorify male for the contribution in independence war of Bangladesh. There is equal participation of female in the war even though their contribution is shadowed by the state. In the novel, Maya as a Muslim girl revolt against religious conventions and want to give justice to the women as they has contributed a lot as male in the independence war of Bangladesh. She has a great role to console women who were sexually and physically tortured in the war. But the women are not ready to accept term given by the state. Aditi a character in a novel states; "yes the Birongonas. But calling them heroines erase what really happened to them. They didn't charge into the battlefield and ask to be given medals. They were just the damage the war trophies. They deserve for us to remember". (223) The name given by them cannot give justice and it is not equivalent as respect and honored. They think that the name Birongana is not sufficient for them and they wants that state must respect them and able to give space in the society again as before.

The traditional idea of history is challenged with the emergence of a new analytical theory known as New Historicism. For New Historicist history is not just the heap of facts and statistics and it cannot be absolutely true. Objective knowledge is relatively true, not completely. The so called pure history is written by the powerful ruling class in their favor, it cannot represent the reality of the time in true sense. New Historicism historicizes a literary text since it regards all the literary works are the product of history although not in a linear form but in a compensative way. It assumes

all literary works are equally important as none literary works in terms of history and they represent history from different bangles. In this sense, the novel *The Good Muslim* is a history independence war of Bangladesh which portrays the critical conditional of female who were participated in the war.

New Historicism considers a work of art is a product of history. An author cannot be detached from his time and space. An author reflects his time and culture in her literary works indirectly. Anam represents the history of Bangladesh through the spectacle of marginalized character. Tahmima Anam revolts against the trends of history writing tradition. Instead of glorifying the role of male in war, Anam is glorifying the contribution of female in the independence war of Bangladesh in this novel *The Good Muslim*. There is the trend of back grounding the role of female and foregrounding the role of male even there is the great role of female in history. In post modern feminism the trends of valorizing only the role of male is strongly opposed. In this novel too, Anam opposed the old trend of creating history. By foregrounding the role of Maya in war Anam standing in favors of Muslim feminism. Mariam Cooke argues;

These women are writing with the increased awareness that the information age has enabled a transnational literary project. To become an international writer means to become part of a community other than the one into which one was born, to write for it as much, if not more, than for one's birth community. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Some may find the international readership more neutral and less inhibiting, allowing them to write in a way not otherwise possible. Others may welcome the new readers who allow them to frame their issues more broadly. (28)

During 1980s many women were suffered, exploited and sexually violated from their enemies in the war. No one was ready to listen their voice and they are ready to write weather they can attract the reader or not. It doesn't matter them that their stories conveys any awareness. They just write their experiences and want to convey their sufferings in their community. However Tahmima Anam here by writing this novel want to revolt against the official history of Bangladesh where male were valorized as they are participated in the war but there is no care for the contribution of male in the independence war of Bangladesh. Judith Butler in the 3rd wave Feminism also presents her terms, "the performance of gender, sex and sexuality is about power in society" (4). In her vision, gender and heterosexuality are constructed as natural because the opposition of the male and female sexes is perceived as natural in the social fantasy. The concept of gender performativity is at the heart of Judith Butler's work *Gender Trouble*. Butler departs from the common assumption that sex, gender and sexuality exist in relation to each other. According to her idea one who is biologically female is not compulsorily expected to display 'feminine' traits and to desire men. She claims that gender is 'unnatural' and for her there is no necessary relationship between one's gender and one's body. In her terms, "the performance of gender, sex and sexuality is about power in society" (4). In her vision, gender and heterosexuality are constructed as natural because the opposition of the male and female sexes is perceived as natural in the social fantasy.

The crux of Butler's argument is that the artificial coherence of sex, gender and sexuality is culturally constructed; the repetition of stylized acts in time. These repetitive stylized bodily acts establish the appearance of an essential, natural coherence. Traditionally, gender roles represent women as inferior creature; beings whose subjectivity is consequence of the internalized patriarchal programming. It is

argued that, "traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast women as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive" (Tyson 85). These gender roles have been used very successfully in the society to justify inequalities, which is done to women by men. This is the argument for which Butler theorizes gender, along with sex and sexuality, as performativity. The rules of the society are just for the benefit of some normative heterosexuality so, it is not real. If the rules are not natural or essential, Butler argues that they do not have any claim to justice. Since those rules are historical and rely on their continual enactment by people, then they can be challenged and changed through the performative acts.

Butler opines that gender identity is 'performative' to stress that no interior essence, no 'real' self exists. Gender is 'performative' because it has no 'reality' at all, no natural core. In Butler's view all the identities are seem to be real but in reality they are just produced one. Female is independent being like male who can perform anything equals to male. Not only independent they can exist in the world without male also.

Traditional gender roles represent woman an inferior creatures, they are forced to accept the laws and costumes that always make them inferior in various ways. It is said that "traditional gender roles cast, man rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast woman as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive" (Tyson 85). Such patriarchal ideology is spread all over the world that advocates the supreme power of male; and it seems to be natural because of its long history.

TahmimaAnam deftly captures the humiliating behavior of the state which depicts the unconditional brutality for the contribution of female in the independence war of Bangladesh. Going through the official history of Bangladesh there is no good treatment towards female. There is everywhere objections for the term offered to the

female. There is no way for satisfaction because the word doesn't give justice to the struggle which make state able to be stood as sovereign country. They want equality in the title given to the both male and female by the state. Sakaranaho Tula in her journal "Women's movement and ideologies in Turkey" argues;

We do not talk about women's rights but prefer to speak about human rights. If you give rights to human beings then also women and men will gain their rights. What is human being? This is most important questions. First we must know what being a human means and then we can give rights to everybody, whether they are men or women. (14)

Women those who are treated differently than the male make claims that they are equal to male and they demand the similar treatment to both male and female. New historism don't talk about identity like others feminism but always seeks for equal rights and equality for both genders. Throught the medium of Maya as the central character in this novel writer doesn't want to establish single gender identity rather she wants to valorize the history of both male and female where the Benglai official history only prioriatize male centric history. Writer attempts to valorize the role of female in Independence war Bangladesh as equal as male is also the best example of giving equal significance of marginal class as aristocratic class which is the major concern of new historism.

*The Good Muslim* reveals the brutality of soldier towards female in the independence of war of Bangladesh. They raped women in the war and impregnate them. Women couldn't recognize their father. Maya is a revolutionary character in a novel. She attempts to perform abortions in Women's Rehabilitation Centre in order to make free of young seeds growing insides many women's womb. It is their compulsion to get rid of those babies because their fathers were unknown and also

state ignores the birth of unknown babies."They are told they are carrying the seeds of their soldier"(142). Being a Muslim girl she performed abortions which are against the religion. Women are hurried to performed abortions because they are ashamed of their unwanted pregnancy. Maya mentions in the novel; "She was early, you could hardly see. It must have happened towards the end of the war. She wanted abortions. Right now, she said. Do it right now. I was busy, I had ten other patients that morning but I told her to wait, I said I would do it. Today, she said it has to be today or I won't be able to" (243). Many women those who were involved in war have the problems of their unwanted pregnancy. So to perform abortions by avoiding religious conventions is seems that she is revolutionary. There are no any boundaries to speak against wrong action. She is in dilemma that to perform abortions in Muslim religion is not convincing but if she does not performed abortions many women get trouble to exist in society. They are ashamed of themselves that they are pregnant of Unknown Soldier. Finally, Maya has taken a risk to abort war babies those who are growing up in many wombs. She mentions,

Defiled by the enemy. The child in your womb is a bastard child, a vial of poison. You must not allow it to come into that world. You must not give it the milk of your breast. What has been done can be undone. You must not live with it for the rest of your life. You mustn't mother this child. Do not think of it as your child, it is the seed of your enemy, I told her. Finally, she agreed.(244)

As government threatens them not to give birth of those innocent victims of war, they are convinced not to mother their babies. If they do so they cannot return with their families. Maya convinced them that growing child in their wombs is the blood of their enemies. And it is better not to give birth for those young ones. As they have

contributed a lot for the war, as a result they have to face traumatic situation. They are ignored by their family and society but Maya encouraged them as they are great person and they are war hero.

New Historicism believes literary works as equal to the non literary works. It presents the contemporary time and events in disguised form from where history can be traced out. Depicting the heroic role of women in the context of independence war of Bangladesh writer attempts to valorize the non literary activities as equal as literary work.

Maya as a social activist rejects and challenges religious beliefs and conventions of Muslim religion. Ziba states "and their attempt to translate into policy the patriarchal gender notions inherent in traditional Islamic Law provoked many women to increasing criticism of these notions and spurred them to greater activism"(4). Maya a Muslim girl acts as social activist and goes beyond social and religious conventions. She attempts to break traditional norms and values of community. She criticizes many unethical and superstitious beliefs practiced in society.

A beat. There were rules about pregnant women, about where they could bathe, but Maya brushed them aside; no one believed those things any more. She had been lecturing them for years now, about science and superstition and their rights. "Why not? She said to Nazia. She would remember it later, the movement of pause before she said yes, but on that day all she could think about was the water, its green coolness easing the lash of that summer. (18)

There are certain rules and values in the Muslim community. Pregnant women are not allowed to be in the pond. They are strictly prohibited to take bathe in a pond. But Maya tries to breaks the rules and regulations. She wants to live without any

restrictions in the society and she also tries to aware other women who are in those burden restrictions. Nazia, a character in the novel breaks the rules and being the victim of punishment. "The punishment was one hundred and one lashes. Masud came back from the meeting and spat the words at his wife. 'One hundred and one', he said. That's what you deserve" (23). Here Nazia's husband gives her punishment for her deed that she has gone swimming in the pond. He blames that the child just born is not his." For lying about the child. He is not mine" (23). For a small matter he blames that the child is from another person. Maya just want to aware of those superstitious beliefs and values which affect negatively in the society. Anita Kynsilehto states; " However, Islam has granted men and women are not men's enemies but rather their friends and helpmates. Thus, Islamic women's movement emphasizes peace and harmony in gender relations" (30). Maya as a Muslim girl tries to expunge injustice and exploitation prevail in the society. She demands parity within the religion

Foucault argues that the rich and powerful people formulate the rules and impose upon the weak and poor. In Bengali community women are treated as the second class, powerless or as the subject. The state of Bangladesh highlighted the contribution of male only in several war of independence where as the very supportive role of female was always back grounded. Tahmima Anam revolt against the trend foregrounding role of powerful people, by valorizing the central role as equal as male of Maya in the independence war of Bangladesh.

After the study of Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*, through the perspectives of new historicism. this research finds out that Tahmima Anam revisits the history through the marginalized perspectives. In the novel *The Good Muslim* Tahmima Anam counters the official history of Bangladesh which demoralizes the contribution of

women in the independence war of Bangladesh. Women who were participated in the war and contributed as equal as male but instead of giving equal priority and justice to female the history only focused on the contribution of male in the war. So Anam presented the glorious participation of female in independence war of Bangladesh. The major character in the novel search out the real role, identity and reality of female who were participated in the war. Besides she projects that both the male and female are the reason to make the state independent. So the history should acknowledge both male and female equally. She tries to show how official mainstream history is biased. She valorizes the female presence in the independence war of Bangladesh. Finally, Anam critiques the gap in mainstream history of Bangladesh.

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